NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN RE:

THE EL FARO INCIDENT OFF : NTSB Accident No.

THE COAST OF THE BAHAMAS ON : DCA16MM001

OCTOBER 1, 2015

Interview of: Kristen Morrison

Wednesday, December 2, 2015

Marriott Hotel Jacksonville, Florida

BEFORE:

CARRIE BELL, NTSB

This transcript was produced from audio provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.

APPEARANCES:

On Behalf of the U.S. Coast Guard:

KEITH FAWCETT U.S. Coast Guard

On Behalf of TOTE Services:

LEE PETERSON
Director, Marine Safety & Services
TOTE Services
10550 Deerwood Park Blvd, Suite 602
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On Behalf of the Interviewee:

GIL FELTEL, ESQ., Tanner Bishop

OTHERS PRESENT:

MELISSA SERRIDGE, TOTE Services

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

1 2 (No time provided) This is Carrie Bell with the MS. BELL: 3 Today is December 2nd, 2015. We are in the 4 NTSB. 5 Jacksonville Residence Inn in Florida. We are interviewing Kristen Morrison in relation to the El 6 7 Faro accident. We'll go around the room in a minute. I'm 8 9 going to just go through these briefing items real 10 quick. 11 NTSB is an independent federal agency charged with determining the probable cause of 12 transportation accidents and promoting transportation 13 14 safety. 15 The purpose of the investigation is to increase safety, not to assign fault, blame or 16 17 liability. 18 NTSB cannot offer any quarantee of 19 confidentiality or immunity from legal or license actions. 2.0 A transcript of this interview will be 21 provided to you for your review, and then eventually it 22 23 will be put into a public docket which will be released to the public. 24

You're allowed to have one representative of

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your choice, which you have. He cannot testify for 1 you, but if you have questions you want to ask, feel 2 free to stop and have that conversation. So that's 3 fine. 4 So again, I'm Carrie Bell. I am the Human 5 Performance Investigator with the -- I'm the group 6 7 chairman of the Human Performance Team and I'll be leading the interview. 8 And we'll go around the room. 9 10 Lee Peterson, the TOTE party MR. PETERSON: 11 coordinator. Melissa Serridge, HR manager 12 MS. SERRIDGE: for TOTE Services and part of the Human Performance 13 14 Group. 15 MR. FAWCETT: Hi, my name is Keith Fawcett. I'm a Coast Guard marine casualty investigator, 16 I work with Carrie and Melissa. And also we 17 civilian. 18 don't have anybody in here from the Nautical Operations Group, so I'm kind of like pinch hitting for them. 19 I'm a licensed mariner. 2.0 21 MS. BELL: Okay. MS. MORRISON: And I'm Kristen Morrison. 22 I'm the business unit controller for TOTE Services. 2.3 24 MR. FELTEL: Gilbert Feltel, Tanner Bishop 25 Law Firm, here as Ms. Morrison's personal

1	representative.		
2	MS. BELL: And are you okay with us		
3	recording this?		
4	MS. MORRISON: Yes.		
5	MS. BELL: Okay. I just wanted you to		
6	acknowledge that on the record.		
7	MS. MORRISON: Absolutely.		
8	MS. BELL: Can you tell me, what is your		
9	title again?		
10	MS. MORRISON: Business Unit Controller.		
11	MS. BELL: Okay. And can you tell us a		
12	little bit about your background?		
13	MS. MORRISON: Sure. I have I graduated		
14	from Flagler College in St. Augustine, Florida. I've		
15	worked in the accounting field for the past 15 years.		
16	I've been with the TOTE companies for the past seven		
17	and in my current role for the past year-and-a-half or		
18	so.		
19	MS. BELL: And in your current role what are		
20	your duties?		
21	MS. MORRISON: I'm responsible for month-end		
22	close, financial statements, reporting. Billing falls		
23	under me. Payroll processing is actually under		
24	Melissa's group, but my group handles the you know,		
25	actually getting it into the ledger and that kind of		

1	thing. Basically anything to do with the the
2	numbers for us.
3	MS. BELL: Okay. And you work for which
4	company?
5	MS. MORRISON: So I am technically this
6	gets tricky, right? So technically I am a TOTE
7	Resources employee. You haven't heard that one before.
8	MS. BELL: No, I haven't.
9	MS. MORRISON: So under the TOTE, Inc. group
10	you have TOTE Resources, you have TOTE Services and
11	then you have the two TOTE Maritime companies. All of
12	the finance employees are TOTE Resources employees.
13	MS. BELL: All of the finance people?
14	MS. MORRISON: Yes, all of the finance
15	people for all of the companies are TOTE Resources
16	employees.
17	MS. BELL: Okay. So do you work with all of
18	the companies then?
19	MS. MORRISON: No, I have a counterpart that
20	there is a business unit controller in all of the
21	the operating companies.
22	MS. BELL: Oh.
23	MS. MORRISON: So there's one in TOTE
24	Maritime Puerto Rico, one in TOTE Maritime Alaska.
25	MS. BELL: Okay.

1 MS. MORRISON: And then I'm -- I'm that 2 person for TOTE Services. MS. BELL: So do you do accounting 3 Okay. 4 for -- you threw me off with the TOTE Resources, so now I'm --5 MS. MORRISON: 6 Sorry. -- trying to figure out --7 MS. BELL: accounting for --8 MS. MORRISON: For TOTE Services. 9 10 Okay. MS. BELL: 11 MS. MORRISON: So the TOTE Services company, 12 we -- we're ship management companies, so we manage vessels for other -- you know, other companies. 13 14 have government vessels, we have some commercial 15 contracts, and then we have the -- the four TOTE 16 Maritime vessels. And we manage those vessels as well. Okay. So you handle the incoming 17 MS. BELL: payment from all of the different contracts? 18 We handle -- we basically --19 MS. MORRISON: 2.0 the way our operation works is we charge a management 21 fee. That is to cover, you know, the -- the day-to-day 22 operating, that kind of thing for the vessels. 23 the expenses are -- are passed through. So for the 24 TOTE Maritime companies, because they're in our 25 company, they get charged directly to those companies.

1	They don't go on our books. I don't see them on my
2	financial statements or anything like that. They get
3	passed straight through. For other contracts they
4	would go on our books, but they're passed through and
5	they're not really an expense to us per se.
6	MS. BELL: Okay. The cargo contracts, you
7	mean?
8	MS. MORRISON: The cargo contracts are not
9	part of us at all. That's totally TOTE Maritime.
10	MS. BELL: Okay.
11	MS. MORRISON: Yes.
12	MS. BELL: So what do you specifically
13	handle?
14	MS. MORRISON: Our Purchasing Group would
15	handle the purchasing of any vessel-related items.
16	MS. BELL: Such as?
17	MS. MORRISON: They handle everything from
18	consumables, you know, towels, linens, maintenance
19	items.
20	MS. BELL: Things that go on the vessel?
21	MS. MORRISON: Yes.
22	MS. BELL: Okay. And not payroll?
23	MS. MORRISON: Payroll also. So crew wages
24	are also part of because the crew are considered
25	TOTE Services employees, those payments are also

_	processed in our office and those do those are a
2	pass-through expense that are recorded on our books and
3	they're passed through to the maritime companies.
4	MS. BELL: So do you work with TOTE Services
5	crewing, Melissa Clark (phonetic), for those types?
6	MS. MORRISON: Not Melissa Clark. For
7	those, I mean, all we really do with the payroll
8	process is Melissa Serridge's group, her Payroll Group
9	will actually process they have the interaction with
LO	the captains and all of that to process the payroll.
L1	We get basically a payroll file that we're putting
L2	together so that we can record the costs in the ledger.
L3	MS. BELL: Okay. So it's basically just to
L4	log it?
L5	MS. MORRISON: Yes.
L6	MS. BELL: Okay. Got it. And you said
L7	you've worked for TOTE for how long?
L8	MS. MORRISON: For seven years.
L9	MS. BELL: Seven years?
20	MS. MORRISON: Seven years, yes.
21	MS. BELL: With the same company, TOTE
22	Resources?
23	MS. MORRISON: I've been well, they just
24	switched the TOTE Resources didn't exist at the
25	beginning. I worked originally I worked for Sea
	I

1	Star Line, back before it was TOTE Maritime Puerto		
2	Rico. A year-and-a-half ago when TOTE Services moved		
3	down from New Jersey was when I came into my current		
4	role and at that point is when I started working for		
5	TOTE Resources.		
6	MS. BELL: Okay. And so who do you report		
7	to?		
8	MS. MORRISON: My boss is Jeff Smith		
9	(phonetic), and he's the financial director for TOTE		
10	Resources.		
11	MS. BELL: Okay.		
12	MS. MORRISON: Yes, I do have a dotted line		
13	to Phil Greene, to the president of TOTE Services.		
14	MS. BELL: Okay.		
15	MS. MORRISON: Yes. So even though		
16	there's agreements in place, basically because of the		
17	services that are provided. We have shared services		
18	agreements		
19	MS. BELL: Okay.		
20	MS. MORRISON: you know, for all the		
21	financial yes, I mean, we're doing AP, AR, all of		
22	that. Accounts payable. Accounts receivable. Sorry.		
23	MS. BELL: Okay.		
24	MS. MORRISON: We handle all you know,		
25	all of the processing of yes, the utilities,		

1	anything like that for the offices are all
2	MS. BELL: Okay.
3	MS. MORRISON: that those are all
4	financial functions.
5	MS. BELL: Yes.
6	MS. MORRISON: So any of those functions are
7	kind of housed into resources. But business unit
8	controller for TOTE Services I have that dotted line
9	MS. BELL: Okay.
10	MS. MORRISON: to to Phil.
11	MS. BELL: So just to understand a little
12	bit more about how the process works in terms of
13	purchasing, if there are things that are needed on the
14	ship, how does that get flowed to you?
15	MS. MORRISON: So purchasing doesn't
16	actually fall under me. It actually falls under
17	Lisa Gee (phonetic) is our purchasing manager and she
18	reports to Lee, but and so I can there's purchase
19	orders that are issued and those flow basically when
20	the invoices are paid. I don't see anything. They
21	don't go into our accounting system until those
22	invoices are actually paid. And that's the first time
23	that I would see anything like that.
24	MS. BELL: Oh, okay.
25	MS. MORRISON: I don't have the visibility

1 when the vessels are, you know, requesting items or 2 anything like that. I'm not notified at that point in time. 3 4 MS. BELL: Okay. So I'm just trying to understand the flow of the various companies and how 5 your role fits across that. And I feel like I'm still 6 7 struggling to understand it. MS. MORRISON: So for TOTE Services I --8 right now we're in the throes of month-end, so I'm 9 preparing journal entries, you know, financial 10 11 reporting, things like that. So that's my support, I guess, to the business --12 MS. BELL: Yes. 13 14 MS. MORRISON: -- is that I'm, you know, 15 getting all of the -- the transactions. You know, the 16 majority of the financial transactions fall under me. I'm getting those processed so that we can then prepare 17 18 the financial reporting --19 MS. BELL: Okay. MS. MORRISON: -- that supports the company. 2.0 21 MS. BELL: Okay. And you said in terms of the contracts, getting paid by the customers, that does 22 23 not go through you? MS. MORRISON: 24 No. 25 MS. BELL: So you never see any of that?

1 MS. MORRISON: No. 2 MS. BELL: Okay. So do you have to do a report, like a presentation at the end of the month or 3 4 do some kind of a board meeting, or anything like that with the rest of the companies? 5 MS. MORRISON: No. No, I mean, we -- each 6 7 of the companies has their own financial statement, so we have our, you know, TOTE Services financial 8 Once we're closed for the month, then I 9 statements. 10 send that out to our Executive Team and, you know, 11 we'll sometimes discuss it. We have a weekly flash We'll sometimes discuss it there. 12 meeting. But there -- it doesn't go out to the other companies. 13 14 MS. BELL: Okay. I'll go around the room to see if opinion --15 MR. PETERSON: Sure. Lee Peterson with 16 Kristen, maybe you could just elaborate on 17 TOTE. what's presented at the flash meetings. 18 19 MS. MORRISON: Sure. I think that might help. 2.0 MR. PETERSON: Yes, so we have a weekly 21 MS. MORRISON: flash meeting where we do a forecast of what we think 22 the month and then, you know, the remainder of the year 23 is going to look like. We present the P&L, more or 24

I mean, I have an Excel spreadsheet that goes

25

less.

1 out that has the P&L and -- and we'll talk about -profit and loss statement. 2 Sorry. And I will send 3 We'll review, you know, a couple of key 4 items on there: our gross profit, our net income, our general and administrative expenses. 5 There's not a whole lot of hot buttons that we kind of address. 6 7 Those are the things that we talk about. From my perspective we've got some billing 8 metrics that we look at as well for billing our 9 10 customers, which doesn't apply to the maritime 11 companies, but it does our external companies, our external customers. 12 13 MR. PETERSON: And this is Lee again. Who 14 attends these weekly meetings? 15 So the flash meetings are MS. MORRISON: 16 attended by the executive management and then other managers throughout the TOTE Services organization. 17 18 Executive management being who? MS. BELL: 19 MS. MORRISON: So do you want names, titles 2.0 or --21 MS. BELL: Sure. 22 MS. MORRISON: Okay. Phil Greene, our president, is there. Mitch Walker (phonetic), who is 23 24 VP of Marine Operations for the government side. 25 Morrell (phonetic), who's VP of Operations for the TOTE

Maritime side, Mick Condracky (phonetic), who's 1 Director of Labor Relations. Lee Peterson attends. 2 And myself. That's it for the Executive Team. 3 4 Serridge is there, Melissa Clark, John Lawrence. 5 Gee. MR. PETERSON: I believe basically 6 7 (inaudible). (Simultaneous speaking) 8 Yes, and like -- yes, 9 MS. MORRISON: 10 basically the managers. Tiffany Nichols (phonetic), 11 who's our -- and their our Directors of Shipping 12 Management also attend. MS. BELL: And that's weekly? 13 14 MS. MORRISON: Yes. 15 Okay. And that is just to go MS. BELL: 16 over the financials? 17 We go over our forecast for, MS. MORRISON: 18 you know, that particular month that we're in. We also review anything that's going on. 19 The -- the actual financial piece maybe takes 10 or 15 minutes of an 2.0 21 hour-long meeting. There's a narrative that goes along 22 with it where we talk about any potential business opportunities, you know, the status of particular 23 24 vessels. You know, our government vessels go in and 25 out of a reserve status and an operating status,

1	there's an opportunity to talk about those. And, you			
2	know, if there's anything really major that's occurring			
3	at any point in time with our vessels. It's more			
4	you know, it's almost like a staff meeting to talk			
5	about, hey, what's going on in your area, you know?			
6	MS. BELL: Okay. Thank you for clarifying			
7	that.			
8	MS. MORRISON: Sure. No problem.			
9	MS. BELL: That's all I have.			
10	MS. MORRISON: Good question.			
11	MS. SERRIDGE: None.			
12	MR. FAWCETT: Keith Fawcett for the Coast			
13	Guard. So you handle money in/money out, putting the			
14	money on the books?			
15	MS. MORRISON: For TOTE Services.			
16	MR. FAWCETT: Correct. Regarding the ships			
17	and the operation of the ships?			
18	MS. MORRISON: Yes.			
19	MR. FAWCETT: So when it comes to like			
20	repairs to the vessel or big ticket items			
21	MS. MORRISON: Yes.			
22	MR. FAWCETT: do you just basically do			
23	what you're told? I'm trying to simplify that.			
24	Someone else approves it and they pass it on to you, or			
25	do you have some part in saying anything about the			

justification of the expense or the cost?

MS. MORRISON: It would depend upon the type of expense to an extent. The normal purchasing process, which I'm by no means an expert on that, so I don't really want to speak out of turn as to the exact process, but we do have, you know, financial controls in place as far as delegation of authority and who has limits as to how much they can approve on a particular invoice.

So if you're, you know, above a certain threshold -- you know, a port engineer has a certain amount that they can approve. A vice president has a certain amount that they can approve. The president. It goes on up to the -- you know, the CFO and the president of TOTE, Inc., depending on the dollar amount of an invoice. So there are, you know, approval processes for a regular invoice and the requisitions of those invoices. I don't have a part of that process as far as the normal operation of the -- you know, the vessels. That just kind of occurs through the system.

We also have what are called capital expenditures. Those are planned major expenses: dry docking of a vessel, new software being put in place, things like that, that that process is a little bit different. And there is -- because for us in finance

there are two different buckets of money. There's operating dollars and there's capital dollars. And so that capital process requires some additional forms to be filled out, some approvals that have to be received before anything can be processed with those.

Those I am involved with as far as I get a copy of the form. I have to sign the actual capital expenditure form when it's being requested. The CFO of TOTE, Inc. approves all of those. And then those expenses, as they come through, go through an automated system and I go in and I view those and so sign-off on those.

MR. FAWCETT: Let me just ask about an example. The decision like to have Intec (phonetic) provide the Polish Riding Gang (phonetic) contractors -- just so I can understand the process, how did that happen? I don't mean happen outside your world. Happen with the cost associated that you manage.

MS. MORRISON: I had no part in -- I mean, that -- those costs didn't even -- those costs aren't TSI costs, so they don't hit my books. Those vessel costs -- so when the TOTE Maritime vessels, you know, request whatever it may be, whether it's just their consumables or a specific repair item, you know, our Purchasing Department handles the requisition and --

and the processing of that. But it gets coded within, you know, the GL codes that are used. It gets coded directly to the TOTE Maritime companies. That's not an expense that flows through on my books, so I don't have a part in that. MR. FAWCETT: Okay. So that would be TOTE Maritime? MS. MORRISON: Yes. MR. FAWCETT: And is there a counterpart with TOTE Maritime that would do the same thing you would do at TSI for that? MS. MORRISON: Yes. MR. FAWCETT: And who would that be? MS. MORRISON: That's Ben Taylor (phonetic). MR. FAWCETT: And would it be the same for like repairs of one of the -- say the El Faro? there was a particular repair that was going to take place that would sort of dry docking or short of major, would you group handle the money in/money out for that? It would -- any of the MS. MORRISON: purchases for the vessel that -- I mean, outside of the payroll really. The payroll is the only thing that hits my books that gets passed through, something that's related to the crew, but any of the other expenses, they go directly to the TOTE Maritime

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1 operating companies. We don't -- I don't see them at 2 all. They go straight there. 3 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. So you mentioned -- and 4 I'm certainly not even remotely business -- I don't 5 have any business acumen. But you talked about the profit and loss. 6 7 MS. MORRISON: Yes. So you've been doing this 8 MR. FAWCETT: particular job within TOTE for a year-and-a-half? 9 10 MS. MORRISON: Yes. 11 MR. FAWCETT: In just general terms have the 12 profits increased? MS. MORRISON: For TOTE Services? 13 14 MR. FAWCETT: Yes. 15 MS. MORRISON: We got a new commercial 16 contract this past year, so our profits have gone up slightly due to that. We got seven new vessels. 17 18 they don't tend to -- you know, our -- our agreement with the TOTE Maritime companies and with the majority 19 of our other customers is a flat management fee rate. 2.0 So you're going to pay me, you know, \$100 a day to 21 You know, 22 manage your vessel, and that's what I get. 23 that's an agreed-upon rate. There may be, you know, an 24 inflation- rate-that's-added-each-year-kind of a thing, 25 but it's an agreed-upon rate ahead of time that says,

1 okay, this is what it's going to cost to do it. 2 sign a contract. We do the same thing with our other 3 commercial contracts and the government contracts, too. 4 MR. FAWCETT: And the seven new vessels, are 5 they MORAD vessels? MS. MORRISON: They -- no, they were ARC, 6 7 American Roll-On Roll Off Carrier. So it's a commercial contract. 8 MR. FAWCETT: And then is your profit and 9 10 loss -- like could you say that, or could you speak to 11 the El Faro and the El Yunque, whether they've been 12 profitable since you've been there? They don't really -- I mean, MS. MORRISON: 13 14 they don't really change too much. All that -- my only revenue, basically because all of the expenses are 15 passed through, is that management fee that we charge. 16 And that's, you know, changed slight from year to year 17 18 just with inflation. But we don't look at each vessel really on a -- on a -- we look at the company in whole 19 on a profit and loss basis. We don't really look at 2.0 21 each vessel in that way. MR. FAWCETT: Are there financial audits? 22 MS. MORRISON: Yes, we have an outside 23 accounting firm that comes in and does an audit every 24 25 They do it at the Saltchuk level and then down year.

1	to each like a TOTE, Inc. level. So the same group			
2	comes and audits all of the TOTE companies.			
3	MR. FAWCETT: So they move through the whole			
4	strata?			
5	MS. MORRISON: Yes. Yes, so this year we			
6	have a new auditor. It's Ernst & Young. Prior to that			
7	it was Price Waterhouse Coopers.			
8	MR. FAWCETT: And at these weekly meetings			
9	so is the flash meeting any different from just a			
10	general company meeting that takes place on Wednesday?			
11	MS. MORRISON: It's only it it is the			
12	meeting that's on Wednesday.			
13	MR. FAWCETT: Okay.			
14	MS. MORRISON: It's only the the			
15	management of the company. So, you know, other staff			
16	members aren't there.			
17	PARTICIPANT: (Off microphone)			
18	MS. MORRISON: Yes, the management of TOTE			
19	Services.			
20	MR. FAWCETT: Right.			
21	MS. MORRISON: Yes.			
22	MR. FAWCETT: At any of those meetings on a			
23	Wednesday, have you made most of them in the last			
24	several months?			
25	MS. MORRISON: Yes.			

1	MR. FAWCETT: Has there been any discussion			
2	about a late-August voyage where the ship took a			
3	different route?			
4	MS. MORRISON: Not to my recollection.			
5	MR. FAWCETT: Okay. Thank you.			
6	MS. MORRISON: You're welcome.			
7	MS. BELL: I don't actually have any other			
8	questions for you.			
9	PARTICIPANT: Nothing here.			
10	MS. BELL: I hate to put it on your, Keith.			
11	On the business side I'm just I'm stumped. Do you			
12	have any			
13	MR. FAWCETT: No, you've been very			
14	forthcoming and very helpful and I thank you very much.			
15	MS. BELL: Yes, thank you.			
16	MS. MORRISON: You're welcome.			
17	MS. BELL: Appreciate it very much. If I			
18	think of anything else, I'll shoot you an email, but I			
19	can't think of anything else that we'll need from you.			
20	Is there anything that maybe we didn't ask you that you			
21	feel like we should			
22	MS. MORRISON: No.			
23	MS. BELL: No?			
24	MS. MORRISON: I kind of didn't know what			
25	you guys would want to ask me, so I was stumped with			

		24
1	that myself.	
2	MS. BELL: Well, thank you for your recap.	
3	It was helpful.	
4	MS. MORRISON: Absolutely.	
5	MS. BELL: Thank you. And that ends our	
6	interview. Thank you.	
7	(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went	
8	off the record.)	
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CERTIFICATE

MATTER: EL FARO INCIDENT OFF THE COAST
OF THE BAHAMAS ON OCT. 1, 2015
NTSB Accident No. DCA16MM001
Interview of Kristen Morrison

DATE: 12-02-14

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 25 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.



NEAL R. GROSS

TABLE OF CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW FOR KRISTIN MORRISON TAKEN ON DECEMBER 2, 2015

PAGE	LINE	CURRENT WORDING	CORRECTED WORDING	
NUMBER	NUMBER			
7	25	resources	Resources	#*
15	1	Condracky	Kondracki	T ₁
21	15	Morad	MARAD	
1		Kristen	Kristin	
3	6	Kristen	Kristin	
4	22	Kristen	Kristin	, , ,
13	17	Kristen	Kristin	
25		Kristen	Kristin	

If to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECT	TIONS NEED
Kristin	Morrison
Printed Nam	e of Person providing the above information
Signature of	Person providing the above information
12.28.	15
Date	

47386.doc